

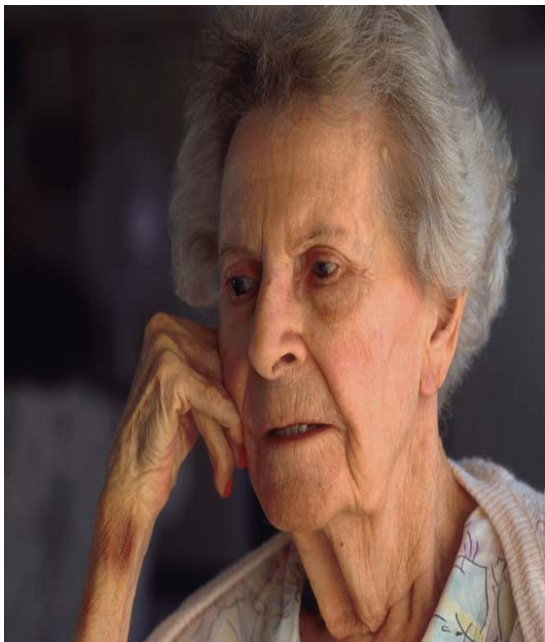
# What is Adult Abuse?

The term “adult abuse” generally means mistreatment of frail or disabled persons who may not be able to protect themselves from harm. Although the term “adult abuse” is commonly used in reference to persons who are 60 years and older, approximately 28 percent of the vulnerable adults in Virginia who are known to be victims of abuse are adults with disabilities who are younger than 60 years.

## TYPES OF ADULT ABUSE

The term “adult abuse” or “elder abuse” includes a wide variety of abusive behaviors including:

- **PHYSICAL ABUSE** — the intentional infliction of physical pain or injury.
- **MENTAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE** — the intentional infliction of mental anguish by threat, intimidation, humiliation, or other means.
- **SEXUAL ABUSE** — unwanted sexual activity.
- **NEGLECT** — the lack of necessary assistance to keep physically and mentally healthy.
- **SELF-NEGLECT** — the failure to provide one’s self with the necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, needed medical care, and reasonable financial management.
- **FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION** — the illegal use of an incapacitated adult’s resources for another’s profit or advantage.



## CHARACTERISTICS OF VICTIMS AND ABUSERS

- ♦ The U.S. House of Representatives Select Committee on Aging reports that the most likely victims of adult abuse are women, persons age 75 or older, and individuals who are isolated and dependent on others for care (AARP)
- ♦ More than two-thirds of adult abuse perpetrators are family members, most often an adult child or spouse (AARP).
- ♦ In Virginia, the greatest number of reports to adult protective services in 2005 were for elders who lived with a spouse or relative, for followed by reports on persons living alone.